

# **Mills-Stout House Designation Report**



**Louisville Metro Historic Landmarks  
and  
Preservation Districts Commission**

**January 19, 2011**

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#### **Location**

The Mills-Stout House is located at 12802 Seatonville Road in the Floyds Fork Area of rural Southeast Jefferson County. The property is comprised of one residential building and several outbuildings on 7.20 acres of land.

#### **Description**

The Mills-Stout house is a two-story, five-bay, hipped roof, single-pile plan, frame residence. Stylistically, the center hall plan Mills-Stout House represents a late transition from the Greek Revival Style to the Italianate Style. A non-historic, two-story, pedimented portico shelters the first and second story façade entries. This portico replaces a historic single-story, flat-roofed porch decorated with sawn scroll work which appears in the photograph accompanying the 1977 state inventory form and later PVA photographs. The historic first-story façade entrance composed of a solid, paneled door, transom and side lights has been replaced with a single-light modern door and modern surround. The historic second story side-lit façade entry has also been replaced by a non-historic double door. The façade six-over-six double hung windows are original.

A two-story, gable roof ell extends from the rear façade of the main block. The fenestration of the north facing elevation has been altered. A historic entrance has been modified with the insertion of a window and a window has been enlarged to accommodate a modern sliding double door. The remaining windows retain their historic four-over-four and six-over-six, double-hung sashes.

A modern, one-story, gable-roofed, frame addition extends from the rear of the ell and a modern, shed-roofed porch spans the south elevation of both the ell and the addition.

The main block rests on a mortared, rough-cut limestone foundation. The exterior wood siding has been covered with aluminum siding and all roof surfaces have been covered with asphalt shingles. Interior brick chimneys are located on the south slopes of the main block and an exterior chimney rises between the ell and the one-story modern addition.

A number of outbuildings are associated with the Mills-Stout House. A modern garage is located just south of the house and is connected to it by a modern covered walkway. A modern gable-roofed frame shed and gazebo are located in a landscaped area southeast of the garage. A cluster of outbuildings are located southwest of the main house. These include a historic gable-roofed frame stable with sheds, a modern gambrel-roofed frame barn, and two small modern frame sheds.

## **History**

The Mills Stout House was built in 1870 by Henry C. Mills, the son of Squire Isaac Mills, a Virginia native and one of Kentucky's pioneer settlers. Isaac Mills was a stone mason by trade and a farmer by occupation. The title "squire" resulted from Mills having held the office of magistrate.

In 1853, Henry Mills married Elizabeth Seaton. Like his father, Henry Mills was primarily a farmer. In 1866, he built a dam at Seatonville and erected a sawmill to which in 1870 he added a gristmill. The land on which Mills erected his house was purchased from Charles A. Seaton in 1870. In 1884, Mills sold the house to Benjamin Stout and it remained in the Stout family for almost 100 years. The current owners are Barbara and Douglas Vicars who purchased the property in 1997.

## **Significance**

The fertile valleys of the Floyds Fork area of Jefferson County largely were not settled and cultivated until the early nineteenth century. Settlers from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina established farms that would eventually connect to string towns or line towns along early farm roads or regional turnpikes that accommodated the shipment of farm products to markets in Louisville. These linear villages, including Fishersville, Fairmont, and Seatonville on a local route flanking Floyds Fork, often grew around saw or gristmills and included post offices, churches, stores, and schools. The rural agricultural economy grew during the antebellum period aiding by major transportation improvements, including the opening of the Portland Canal in 1830, and the development of the Louisville and Frankfort Railroad in 1851 and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad in 1859. These developments enhanced the linkage between Jefferson County's rural farms and markets in Louisville and beyond.

The post Civil War era brought greater prosperity to rural Jefferson County. Like much of Jefferson County during Reconstruction, the Floyds Fork area's population grew as a result of the eastward flow of urban expansion. Agricultural prosperity was based on the production of a variety of field crops and livestock including poultry, sheep, cattle, and hogs. With this economic expansion came a concomitant expansion of existing farms and establishment of new farms.

Seatonville is located in southeast Jefferson County about two miles from the Bullitt County line. It was named for the Seaton family, who were among Jefferson County's earliest settlers. In the early nineteenth century, a road from Jeffersontown to Taylorsville ran past Seatonville. An existing mill about one-half mile upstream had been acquired by the Funk family in the late eighteenth century and the Funks continued to operate it until 1876. The popularity of the mill helped support several commercial ventures in Seatonville.



*Beer's and Lanagan Atlas, 1879*

In 1900, it had about 75 residents, two stores several grist and sawmills and a school. A post office was established soon after. Over time, transportation improvements and the popularity of the automobile contributed to the village's decline. Large farming operations began to dominate the market and smaller truck farms along with Seatonville's stores and mills began to disappear. Today, only the Mills-Stout House marks the site of historic Seatonville.

Architecturally, the Mills-Stout House is indicative of the domestic architecture chosen by successful farmers in southeastern Jefferson County during the post Civil War expansion of the agricultural economy. Residential architecture tended to be three bay to five bay, wood frame, gable or hipped roof, two-and-a-half story, with rear ell. Interior spatial arrangement tended to be the center hall, single pile plan that characterizes the standard I-House. The most similar structure is the Mills-Wheeler House (11900 Fairmount Rd.), a frame five-bay, center hall plan house with rear ell. Unlike the Mill-Stout House, it has a side gable roof. Other examples include the Reid House on Brush Run Road and the Walter Frank House on Back Run Road.

### **Archeological Significance**

Like other nineteenth century farms and plantation, The Mills-Stout House has high potential for containing significant archaeological resources. Remnants of domestic outbuildings and artifact middens associated with domestic activities are likely present on the property, as has been demonstrated by excavations conducted on similar properties throughout Jefferson County.

Extensive archaeological excavations have been conducted at Locust Grove (15Jf541), Farmington (15Jf574), Riverside, the Farnsley-Moremen Landing (15Jf531), and Johnson-Bates

(15Jf538). Most of these projects have focused on locating and interpreting outbuildings. At Locust Grove, the springhouse (Granger and Mocas 1972), three slave cabins (Young 1995), a barn, and an agricultural building (DiBlasi 1997) were excavated. A kitchen (McBride and Bellhorn 1992) and a slave cabin (Slider 1998) were excavated at Farmington. A detached kitchen and wash house was excavated at Riverside, the Farnsley-Moremen Landing (Stottman and Watts-Roy 2000, Stottman and Prybylski 2005). At the Johnson-Bates farmstead an extensive investigation of several outbuildings was conducted (O'Malley 1987b). Limited excavations have taken place at several other historic sites in the county including Blackacre (15Jf681) (Stottman 2000), Stonybrook (15Jf676) (Stallings and Ross-Stallings 1999), the Conrad/Dravo farmstead (15Jf638) (Bader 1997), the Vulcan Rudy slave house (15Jf685) (Stottman 2001), the Hall-Standiford tenant house (15Jf571) (Stottman et al. 1992) and Oxmoor (Young 1997). This work indicates that sites such as the Mills-Stout House have potential to produce significant archaeological information.

As evidenced by the 1879 Beer's and Lanagan *Atlas of Louisville and Jefferson County*, Seatonville by the third quarter of the nineteenth century was a compact, bustling node in the expanding farm to market economy. Two stores, a blacksmith shop, a livery stable, five residences, and a steam-powered saw mill huddled around the convergence of Floyds Fork and the Seatonville Road. With the exception of the Mills-Stout House, all of the aforementioned above ground resources have been removed. Given the subsequent agricultural land usage, however, there is a very high probability that intact and significant archaeological resources have survived.

### **Integrity Assessment**

The essential block of the house retains its historic form and for the most part, the spatial arrangements remain intact. The location of the building has remained the same. There have been several major exterior alterations to the house since it was constructed. A modern, two-story pedimented front porch has been added and the original removed. A modern shed roof porch on the south elevation, an addition to the rear of the original ell, and the wrapping of the house with artificial siding have somewhat obscured the original construction. Some alterations to window and door openings have occurred and these changes have also impacted the architectural character of the house. The immediate setting of the domestic yard is intact surrounding the house. The Mills-Stout House retains many of the character-defining features that support the historic significance of the property.



### **Boundary Justification**

The property proposed for designation is located at 12802 Seatonville Road. The property contains 7.2 acres of land as well as the residence and several outbuildings. It is described by the Jefferson County Property Evaluation Administrator (PVA) under parcel number 0058-0077-0000. The proposed boundaries for the Mills-Stout House Individual Local Landmark designation area are represented by the black lines on the LOJIC aerial photograph that follows:



LOJIC Aerial Photograph

### **Sources of Information**

Maas, Anna and Richard Meyer. A Cultural-Historic Survey of the Proposed Floyds Fork Greenway Project, Jefferson County, Kentucky. John Milner Associates, December 2009.

Maas, Anna. A Cultural-Historic Survey of the Mills-Stout House. Corn Island Archaeology, 2010.

Kleber, John, Editor. *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*. The University Press of Kentucky. 2001. History of the Ohio Falls Cities and Their Counties, Vol II. L.A. Williams & Co. Cleveland, Ohio, 1882.

## Designation Criteria

In considering the designation of any neighborhood, area, Property or Structure in Louisville Metro and Jefferson County as a Local Landmark, or District, the Commission shall apply the following criteria with respect to such Structure, Property or District:

Local Landmark Designation Criteria	Comments	Meets	Does Not Meet
(a) Its character, interest, or value as part of the development or heritage of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the United States.	Representative of post-Civil War development in southeastern Jefferson County, the Mills-Stout House reflects improvements in transportation and the subsequent expansion of the agricultural economy.	X	
(b) Its exemplification of the historic, aesthetic, architectural, archaeological, prehistoric or historic archaeological, educational, economic, or cultural heritage of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.	The site is likely to yield archeological information about the postbellum period in rural Jefferson County.	X	
(c) Its location as a site of a significant historic event.			X
(d) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.			X
(e) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.	With its side gable roof, central hall plan, and rear service ell, the Mills-Stout House represents a modified version of the distinctive I-House.	X	

(f) Its identification as the work of an architect, landscape architect, or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of Louisville Metro, Jefferson County, the Commonwealth, or the nation.			<b>X</b>
(g) Its embodiment of elements or architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship, which represents a significant architectural innovation.			<b>X</b>
(h) Its relationship to other distinctive areas, which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.	The Mills-Stout House shares an architectural typology and similar history with several extant resources in southeastern Jefferson County. None have Individual Landmark status.	<b>X</b>	
(i) Its unique location or physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature or which reinforce the physical continuity of a neighborhood, area, or place within Louisville Metro.	The Mills-Stout House is the last remnant of historic Seatonville.	<b>X</b>	



## Photographs



Mills-Stout House, facade



Mills-Stout House, southern elevation



Mills-Stout House, modern rear addition



Mills-Stout House, modern garage





Mills-Stout House, modern covered walkway



Mills-Stout House, modern shed



Mills-Stout House, north field



Mills-Stout House, outbuildings



Mills-Stout House, PVA photo prior to renovations